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ABSTRACT

This monograph analyzes the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession's recommendations for a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, focusing upon the development and management of the proposed Board, and the assessment approaches used to implement the idea of national certification. While the task force recommends two levels of professional certification, this analysis concentrates specifically on the initial or first level of certification. The point is made that while "licensing" indicates the individual meets minimum state standards, and "certification" means that the profession has pronounced the certificate holder competent, the task force was receptive to the notion that various licensing agencies adopt the national certification standards as the basis for the license. This analysis includes discussions on: (1) initial program level issues and tradeoffs; (2) separation of authority versus merging of authority; (3) assessment of the job versus assessment prior to beginning teaching; (4) voluntary certification versus mandatory certification; (5) specific assessment strategies and tools in professional assessment in the field of teaching; (6) state and local level concerns; and (7) program costs. (JD)

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INITIAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION/LICENSING:

An Analysis of the Carnegie Task Force Recommendations for a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

by
Michael Caldwell

September, 1986

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INITIAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION/LICENSING:

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PREFACE

For the past several years the Bureau of Educational Research of the University of Virginia has been working with the Virginia Department of Education and representatives of the professional education community in Virginia on the design and initial implementation of an assessment and assistance program for beginning teachers. This program, The Virginia Beginning Teacher Assistance Program, involves classroom performance competencies (standards) which must be demonstrated in the context of the regular classroom by observation if the teacher is to have the initial two year nonrenewable certificate upgraded to the regular Virginia renewable certificate.

Many of the ideas contained in this report grew out of the experiences of my collegues (Donald Ball, Brenda Loyd, Robert McNergney and Donald Medley) and I as we have worked on the development of The Virginia Beginning Teacher Assistance Program during the past several years. While the reader should not hold these individuals responsible for the positions taken in this report, I would be remiss if I failed to recognize the influence which they have had on my thinking about some of the issues related to teacher certification and teacher assessment.

Michael Caldwell, Director
Bureau of Educational Research

INITIAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION/LICENSING:

An Analysis of the Carnegie Task Force Recommendation for a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The recommendation, as set forth by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, for the establishment of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is worthy of serious consideration. This basic idea has been casually discussed in educational circles for a number of years, discussed in the sense that the idea has been used occasionally in academic settings as a vehicle to analyze broad educational issues but casually in the sense that such discussions had neither the intent nor the impetus to move from the discussion stage to any serious efforts at implementation.

Reawakened public concern regarding the educational system in this country and the public realization that the teacher is central to the notion of what the schools are all about are prominent factors making current conditions more favorable for recommendations for change within the field of education. In addition, the fact that teachers for some number of years have been losing buying power to inflation and the fact that teaching as a career choice is unable to compete favorably with alternative career choices are also factors which currently bring focus to the issue. Teaching as a career choice no longer has the luxury of being able to tap the best and brightest from certain groups, e.g., women and minorities, because there are few other options available to them. However, as the task force points out ". . . pay that is high enough is not likely to be forthcoming unless standards for teachers are high enough to justify the cost." Increased public credibility is the price tag for increased teacher salaries and such credibility is, in large

part, dependent on increasing standards for entry into the teaching profession.

The national teacher organizations, NEA and AFT, have come to the realization that an increased emphasis on the professional gatekeeping function is a necessity if teachers are to enjoy the public confidence. Both of these organizations were represented on the task force and leadership personnel in both organizations are actively supporting the notion of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The National Center for Educational Information (Feistritzer, 1986) reports that teachers do not tend to move around much, that one-fourth of teachers have taught in only one school and that an additional one-fourth have taught in only two schools, that two-thirds of today's public school teachers got their college education within 150 miles of where they were born and that two-thirds are now teaching within 150 miles of their birthplace. However, arguments in support of national teaching standards and certification based on the mobility of the teaching force are still relevant. One hundred and fifty miles can take one across a number of state boundaries. For example, slightly more than one-half of the approximately two thousand new teachers in Virginia each year come from teacher training programs and/or jobs in states other than Virginia.

Advances in the state-of-the-art in the area of personnel assessment provide another argument for the timliness of the national certification notion. First, there is a growing base of research information focusing on effective teaching. To be sure, this research base is in need of improvement and expansion, but it does provide a reasonable basis upon which to begin the development of the substance of certification assessment. There are several efforts currently under way which should improve our technical capability to generate sound performance data in actual classroom

settings. A number of states are currently initiating beginning teacher programs which involve the use of assessment information generated through the observations of teachers teaching in classrooms. These efforts should provide insights into the measurement and logistical problems associated with classroom assessment and insights into possible solutions to these problems.

Given the above, the current national educational scene appears to hold some promise that the notion of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has a chance of being seriously considered at this time. In fact, the following analysis and discussion is based on the assumption that this is a worthwhile idea and that the task force recommendation, or some variation thereof, will become a reality within the next decade. As a result, what follows will focus on the next level of certification program design and the operationalization of the system rather than on a lengthy justification for the concept itself. Decisions made at the program design level are sufficiently critical that the substance of these decisions and the procedures by which they are made are, in fact, policy level decisions which will greatly influence the degree to which the idea of national certification standards and assessment will be successfully implemented. Policy level recommendations are often addressed on the basis of "I support this notion if _____." The resolution of general program design issues serves to fill in the blank.

The focus of this discussion will be on the development and management of the proposed National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the assessment approaches utilized to implement the idea of national certification. It is assumed here that it is possible to develop sound assessment information, i.e., the technology exists or is currently emerging which will allow us to produce valid and reliable assessment information. An equally important assumption is that the general structure of the assessment

system, including the credibility of the general public and the professional community and the relative ease with which the system can be implemented, is as important to the success of the idea of national certification as is the ability to develop valid and reliable assessment instrumentation.

In this writer's opinion, great care should be taken in interpreting one of the task force statements. In terms of the total package of its various recommendations for change the task force asserts that "This is not a list of independent strategies. They constitute a whole. None will succeed unless all are implemented." Now, it seems to me that a literal interpretation of this statement causes problems for two reasons. First, this assertion is not entirely true. Certainly, the task force is correct in making the point that the various recommendations are interrelated and that all are important. While the statement might be true relative to the realization of the specific task force vision of the educational system in this country, it is also true that improvements in the educational system can be made even if all of the recommendations are not implemented.

Second, it occurs to me that thinking about a change strategy in this manner is self-defeating. Such a conceptualization suggests that all elements constrain all other elements and that if one element (recommendation) is unsuccessful then all elements are unsuccessful--a hazardous way of thinking, particularly in view of the fact that each of the various recommendations is significant (in terms of the amount of change involved) and, therefore, that progress toward implementation in each area is, at best, problematical. In other words, an all or nothing position, especially when so many large and complex elements are involved, increases greatly the probability of failure.

Large scale change in large and complex systems tends to occur on a broken front, that is, progress in some areas of recommended change, because they are more acceptable,

easier and/or less expensive to implement, etc., will proceed more quickly than others and some may not be implemented at all. In addition, in those areas in which change does occur progress will tend to be incremental, i.e., occurring in a series of relatively small steps which move the system in the desired direction. Such a notion of change also produces less stress to the system, thereby allowing it to continue to function as the change is occurring.

It is reasonable to expect that progress on the various task force recommendations will be uneven and will move at different rates and that some of the task force suggestions might not be implemented at all. If by some chance all aspects of the task force recommendations were to be implemented, such implementation will certainly not occur in the short run or on the same time table for all areas of recommended change. Therefore, it is prudent to identify those elements which are most amenable to attack and to move with dispatch on those fronts. To proceed otherwise increases the risk of having yet another national report which contains some sound and manageable suggestions relegated to the library shelf for occasional academic discussions.

While the task force recommends two levels of professional certification, this analysis will focus specifically on the initial or first level of certification. It is assumed that both the substance and procedures for the two levels of certificates will be substantially different and will involve different timelines. It is also assumed here that the initial certificate and the assessment system which supports it will be easier to deal with than will the advanced certificate and its assessment system.

Experience in working with a licensing program at the state level has convinced this writer that the development and implementation of such a program will contain two separate but highly interrelated dimensions, (1) the assessment

techniques and instruments and (2) the management and logistics of the overall system. Both must be "in place" at an acceptable level in order for the system to work as intended. On the one hand, we are not interested in the effective and efficient implementation of a personnel assessment program which generates information which does not meet validity and reliability criteria and, on the other hand, the profession is not well served by valid and reliable assessment instrumentation which is not used, e.g., because it is too costly, too unwieldy and/or is not credible to those who make personnel decisions.

Because these two major dimensions are highly interactive, the development of such a program may be conceived of as a series of tradeoff decisions, each of which will open, or keep open, certain options while at the same time restricting other program options. The major focus of this analysis is upon those program aspects which deal most directly with the total system structure and management. However, because of the tradeoffs which exist between the measurement aspects of the assessment and the structure of the program, measurement issues will be touched on briefly, primarily to identify these areas of tradeoff.

DEFINITIONS

A necessary first step in an analysis of the task force recommendation for the establishment of national professional certification standards is the establishment of a common ground for communication---a set of definitions. This is especially critical in the area of licensing and certification because as the task force states "We should note in passing that in education the terminology is unusual in that what we are here describing as licensure is generally referred to as certification." The following definitions are

offered in an attempt to remain consistent with the task force terminology. In addition, there are definitions of a few concepts which the task force did not address directly but which are central to the discussion.

According to the task force "Certification is usually different from licensure. The profession issues the certificate. The state must issue the license." Specifically:

1. the license ". . . indicates that the licensee meets the minimum standard established by the state to legally practice in the state."

2. certification ". . . means the profession itself pronounces the certificate holder fully competent to perform at a high professional standard."

The task force would be receptive to the notion, consistent with some of the other professions, that the various licensing agencies adopt the national certification standards as the basis for the license. The task force states that "In time, many states are likely to incorporate the national certification standard into their licensing standards. Some might choose to waive their licensing requirement for people holding a board certificate." While one might interpret this statement as predictive only, it is clear to this writer that the task force really means that they "hope" that this will occur. Furthermore, the degree to which such an event occurs will have a great deal to do with the degree to which the national certification concept has a major impact on American education. The reason for this assertion is that, while certification according to the task force is conceived as voluntary, the possession of a license to practice is required and, thus, carries much more direct and significant sanctions. Simply put, without a license

one is not allowed to practice. On the assumption that such an event will occur in some states, the term certification/licensing will be used in the following discussion.

3. certification/licensing--the condition which exists when the state, the authority for licensing teachers, accepts the National Board certification assessment procedure and standard as the basis upon which to issue a license to practice.

A fourth definition, not directly addressed by the task force in the discussion about a national certification system, is necessary to an understanding some of the issues discussed later in this analysis. Neither the profession nor the states employ teachers, local school districts employ teachers, and it is the employing agency which sets the conditions of employment. True, state regulations and the influence of professional organizations certainly impact local employment practices and procedures but the legal authority for final decisions resides with the locality. While some of the task force recommendations suggest that conditions of employment might even vary at as low a level as the individual school building, none of the recommendations suggest that specific employment practices be addressed at a level higher than the school district.

4. employment practices--conditions of employment, e.g., hire and fire teachers, make assignments, and set salary levels, for which local school districts have both the responsibility and authority.

INITIAL PROGRAM LEVEL ISSUES AND TRADEOFFS

The development of a national certification assessment system with the scope, size and complexity as envisioned by the task force will involve a number of important decisions. While each of these decisions is in and of itself critical, of even more significance is the interaction of the decisions and the constraints which initial decisions put on subsequent decision options. The following represent a few such decisions.

Summative vs. Formative Assessment System

The task force states that "The board's primary function would be to establish standards for high professional teaching competence and issue certificates to people who meet those standards." Thus, the major thrust relative to development and implementation of professional teaching standards is summative rather formative in focus. This is no small point in light of the fact that much of the current activity in the area of teacher assessment has a strong formative evaluation orientation, i.e., evaluation designed primarily to provide information to assist teachers to improve. Certainly, the establishment of standards of performance and the development of techniques by which individuals can demonstrate that they meet those standards (basically, summative assessment) does not preclude the fact that such assessment will generate information which might be used diagnostically to assist individual teachers to improve. However, the major focus of the design of the National Board performance assessment is summative in nature. There is no one best assessment design which meets all legitimate personnel assessment purposes and, thus, one should be quite certain as to the purposes of the assessment prior to beginning to design the system (Wise, 1984).

The task force recognizes that the assessment system will generate diagnostic information, e.g., the report states that the assessment system ". . . should be designed not to eliminate candidates but to identify deficiencies in preparation that need to be corrected before a certificate is granted." However, by omission, the task force does not view the remediation of assessed deficiencies as the responsibility of the National Board.

Unified System vs. Multiple Systems

The National Board certification assessment approach will constitute a single unified system, though there will be various teacher classifications within the system. For example, the task force states that certificates would ". . be specific to subjects taught and grade ranges. . ." This suggests that the substance and/or the level of performance required to demonstrate the standards might vary across subject matter areas and grade levels. It should be noted that the task force did not suggest that there do not exist **generic** teaching knowledge and skills and it is assumed that, if such knowledges and skills exist, that they will constitute "common" elements of assessment across subject matter and grade level classifications.

It might be argued that classifying teachers on the basis of dimensions other than, or in addition to, subject matter and grade level might be appropriate. For example, it might be that effective teachers in large innercity high schools behave more like each other than they do when compared with their effective subject matter counterparts in small rural high schools. It is expected, as the task force suggests, that the growing body of literature on research on teaching and the accumulated wisdom of the profession will provide an appropriate basis for initial decisions relative

to the different dimensions which will be used to differentiate specialized areas within the certificates.

The notion of a single unified system reflects the idea that two teachers (classified similarly within subject matter and grade level designations) who possess comparable levels of a competency will have an equal chance of demonstrating that they possess that competency during the assessment procedure. This is especially a concern with assessment which involves classroom observation. The experience base with group administered paper and pencil tests suggests that large scale national assessment is possible. Assessment administration procedures, on those dimensions believed to be relevant, are standardized and most often centralized as are assessment scoring procedures. Such standardization procedures provide the required equity and fairness in large scale paper and pencil testing programs.

The task force is quite correct in stating that "The administration of the assessment will clearly have to be decentralized to guarantee easy access for candidates." For cost, logistical and equity reasons, it is obvious that the decentralization tradeoff decision must be made. However, it should be recognized that such a decision is not made without some cost. Unlike the relative ease with which we can standardize the administration and scoring of paper and pencil assessment information, the problems associated with performance information generated through observations in classrooms is quite another matter. Rather elaborate observer training and monitoring procedures will need to be developed and implemented to insure that an individual's assessment score is, in fact, a function of his/her level of competence rather than a function of who he/she had as an observer in the classroom.

Separation of Authority vs. Merging of Authority

The task force supports the notion that the establishment of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards will not affect the strong legal and traditional practices in this country relative to the separation of the authority for certification, licensing, and local employment practices. The task force, in fact, reconfirms the separation of certification and licencing by including in its definitions that certification is what the profession does and licensing is what the state does. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the task force would agree that the setting and administering of employment practices is what local school districts do. The implications of this assumption will be addressed in some detail in the section on state and local concerns.

Assessment on the Job vs. Assessment Prior to Beginning Teaching

The task force describes the certification assessment structure in general terms as follows:

> The task force believes the assessment should be in three stages. The first, related to subject matter, would typically be taken on graduation from college. The second, testing student mastery of the material usually covered in professional educational coursework, whenever the candidate was ready. The third, based on observation of the candidate's actual teaching over a substantial period, would be the last stage.

Though the task force does not directly say so, the proposed assessment structure virtually precludes the possi-

bility that an individual will achieve the initial National Board certificate prior to being employed as a teacher in a local school district. The basis for this reasoning is as follows:

1. The phrase "actual teaching over a substantial period" strongly suggests that this assessment cannot be accomplished during the student teaching period. The notion of actual teaching connotes more responsibility for the conduct of the class than is typically afforded to the student teacher and the notion of substantial period exceeds the time frame typically involved in the student teaching experience.

2. The task force proposes that teacher training extend beyond the typical time, four years, associated with the baccalaureate degree and might be thinking that the extensive field experience associated with a fifth year would be an appropriate period for the performance assessment. This would appear to be an unacceptable alternative for three reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, it is assumed that the task force recommendations will be addressed on an incremental basis and in addition, on a broken front. It might not reasonable to assume, for example, that five year teacher training programs will be widely used in the near future or, even that such programs will become the norm. If this is true, then the long term intern/practicum setting might not be available to large numbers of beginning teachers.

   Second, the report suggests that alternative routes to entering teaching would be desirable when the task force talks about creating "an alternate route into the profession that will enlarge the pool of people who can be attracted to the profession." Tying third stage performance assessment to any field exper-

ience associated with a formal teacher training program, during student teaching and/or a fifth year practicum, would totally negate, or severely limit, the possibility of some alternative routes into the profession.

Third, the task force sets a high qualitative level for holders of the professional certificate. The report states that "The certificate means the profession itself pronounces the certificate holder fully competent to perform at a high professional standard." It is noteworthy that the language emphasizes fully competent and high professional standard and not minimum standard or safe to practice. Now, prediction is a risky business in any case, but it seems unlikely that the profession would be willing to pronounce an individual who has had **NO** actual experience as a teacher to be fully competent to practice at a high professional level. At least, I certainly hope not.

For these reasons it seems clear that the stage three classroom performance assessment will necessarily be performed in the actual school classrooms of individuals who are employed as teachers by local school divisions. The implications of such an arrangement are not insignificant, at least in the view of public school administrators and teachers, and are discussed in some detail in the section on state and local concerns.

Voluntary Certification vs. Mandatory Certification

Although the task force states that the certification process should be "completely voluntary," the report states that:

> In time, many states are likely to incorporate the national certification standard into their licensing standards. Some might choose to waive their licensing requirement for people holding a board certificate.
>
> Others might make board certification a prerequisite for licensing, adding their own requirements to the national standard as they think appropriate.

It is clear that the task force supports a condition, as is often the case in medicine and law, in which the state authority for licensing would adopt National Board certification as the primary requirement for being issued a state license to practice. As mentioned earlier, the ultimate success of the national certification concept will be, in large part, a function of the degree to which individual states do, in fact, incorporate the national standards into their respective state teacher licensing policies and procedures. A move in this direction, though greatly to be desired, will necessitate some adjustment in the thinking of the task force---voluntary at one level may be mandatory at another. For example, if South Dakota voluntarily incorporates passing the boards as a requirement for being licensed in that state, then for a beginning teacher who wishes to teach in South Dakota passing the boards is mandatory not voluntary. The term beginning teacher is used intentionally because it is assumed that experienced teachers who already possess "regular" license in some state would be "grandfathered in" and, thus, for them the system would be voluntary.

Bounded Completion Time vs. Unlimited Completion Time

The task force recommendation that the third certificate assessment stage should be "based on observation of the candidate's actual teaching over a substantial period" suggests that the candidate would have to be employed as a teacher in a local school district prior to successfully completing all of the requirements for the initial national teaching certificate. As a result, those states which incorporate the national standards, e.g. passing the boards, into their respective licensing systems will need to make provision to handle the time period between when a beginning teacher is employed in a teaching position and when that teacher completes the requirements for the national certificate. Several states, particularly those which have recently initiated programs for beginning teachers, already have such provisions in place. For example, Virginia has a two year nonrenewable provisional license which is issued to all beginning teachers. This provisional license is upgraded to a regular five year renewable license at the end of two years if the teacher meets certain state requirements.

No matter what particular approach a state chooses to deal with this situation, it will likely have implications for the timing associated with the attainment of initial National Board certification, e.g., the task force suggests that "Each candidate should have as much time as is needed to complete the assessment process." Now, it is unlikely that states will wish to issue an initial/interim license of indeterminate length. In other words, though it is possible to make an "educational" argument that a candidate should have an unlimited time to complete the requirements for the certificate, if states tie their licensing policies and procedures to the attainment of the professional certificate then there will be, in fact, a practical time deadline associated with the process.

NOTE: It might be more appropriate to conceptualize this condition as "number of tries" rather than, or, in addition to, amount of time. In other words, the candidate might be afforded a given number of opportunities to demonstrate that he/she meets the national standards and there would be some timeframe related to when these opportunities would be available.

This practical time deadline will probably be related to the time line associated with the attainment of tenure status. It is extremely unlikely that states and/or local school districts would wish to grant tenure status to teachers who do not possess a regular state license. In most states the timeline associated with the attainment of tenure status is typically three years. However, the effective length of time available to achieve the professional certificate would be somewhat less. The reason for this is that local school districts usually engage in contract negotiations during the spring of the year and these negotiations could not proceed if the teacher did not already possess (or was assured of meeting all of the requirements for) a regular state teaching license.

The tradeoff decision relative to timing also has implications for the time requirements necessary to conduct effective stage three assessment and the length of the "provisional period" before attaining tenure status. In other words, too short a time period might adversely affect the soundness of the stage three assessment and attempts to extend the provisional period before attaining tenure status will probably not be viewed favorably by the national teacher organizations or their state affiliates. It might be argued that a two and one-half year time period (assuming that the usual time associated with the attainment of tenure status is three years) is not an unreasonable amount of time to achieve the purposes of stage three assessment, but time (or number of tries) restrictions does represent quite a

change from the task force notion of ". . .as much time as is needed to complete the assessment process."

PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT IN THE FIELD OF TEACHING

In specifying some of the defining attributes of a profession, the task force states:

> Virtually every occupation regarded by the public as a true profession has codified the knowledge, the specific expertise, required by practitioners, and has required that those who wish to practice that profession with the sanction of its members demonstrate that they have a command of the needed knowledge and the ability to apply it.

The notion of a codified knowledge base in the field of teaching is particularly troubling because the lack of such a codified knowledge base constrains subsequent professional gatekeeping activities, e.g., the development of professional standards for teaching and the development of instrumentation to assess the degree to which teachers meet those standards. However, discussion and resolution of many of the previously discussed issues do not have to wait for the completion of the knowledge codification process, the development of the professional standards or the completion of the assessment instrumentation. To begin work on these issues merely requires a commitment to the notion of national certification, the assumption that the knowledge base does exist and can be codified, that reasonable professional standards can be developed, and that the state-of-the-art of personnel assessment is such that appropriate instrumentation can be constructed.

There certainly does exist a body knowledge (and one which is growing) which undergirds the practice of teaching, though it is neither systematized nor generally accepted throughout the professional community. It is suggested here that efforts growing out of task force recommendations which make progress toward the notion of codifying the knowledge base in teaching will advance the profession in great measure even in the absense of progress on the other fronts which the task force suggests.

At the outset it should be recognized that there is a relationship between the codification of the professional knowledge base and the degree of standardization which exists in professional training programs. Now, teacher educators and practioners have long been leery of the notion of a national curriculum for teacher education and not without cause because we simply do not know of a single best way to educate teachers or a single best way to perform the act of teaching. We do, however, need to examine the implications growing out of this resistance to the concept of national curricula. First, the currently prevalent "approved program approach" in teacher education and teacher licensing places the emphasis on certain process and context variables rather than on program product variables, i.e., what trained teachers know and can do. Given the very large number of teacher education programs in this country, recently estimated at 1,287 (Feistritzer, 1984), and the great variability in these programs in terms of entrance criteria and exit standards, number and credentials of program staff and number and types of course and experience offerings, it is fallacious to think about teacher training as if there were any such thing as teacher education in the monolithic sense. As Lanier and Little (1986) state:

> . . . there is limited common substance to the teacher education curriculum. The course content that prospective and practicing teachers have an opportunity to learn is highly unstable and indi-

vidualistic. The variation among and within courses and workshops at different institutions, as well as in the same institutions over brief periods of time, achieves almost infinite variety.

This variety is even more pronounced than it appears on its face. An examination of student experiences within programs will reveal additional variation in that some students in a program take different courses than other students in that program and, for those who are familiar with programs in institutions of higher education, it is no surprise that the same course taught by two different instructors is actually two different courses. For that matter, two sections of the same course taught by the same instructor might, in fact, be two different courses. Thus, in the curricular sense there are literally thousands of teacher education programs currently being offered in this country.

In and of itself this condition would not be such a problem if the profession had reasonable outcome measures such as proposed by the task force. Current teacher examinations, however, seem to be developed in a backward fashion, i.e., based on what is being taught in teacher training programs. Now, we all learned in the first course in educational measurement that in the interest of fairness we should test for what we teach and the term "curricular validity" is often used to refer to the relatedness of what is taught to what is assessed. However, given the large number and extreme variability of teacher education programs (treatments), the teaching assessment instrumentation is often reduced to the lowest common denominator.

A second but related problem pertains to the fact that the field of education has worked very hard to escape charges of the use of "jargon" when communicating about the field and its knowledge base. The problem here is not with the knowledge base but with the attempts to refrain from

using a specialized language. Interestingly, other professions, e.g., medicine and law, do not seem to have such concerns. Specialized knowledge often requires a specialized language to communicate that knowledge, and, in fact, the existance and use of a specialized language might even be considered as one of the defining attributes of a professional field.

In the field of teacher education the notion of fairness, i.e., not holding the candidate accountable for knowledge to which he/she has not been exposed in the curriculum, and the aversion to the use of specialized language often results in examinations which reduce the knowledge base to the level of common sense. Thus, no specialized knowledge is, in fact, necessary in order to pass many examinations in the field with the result that such examinations do not discrimminate between those who have studied in the field and those who have not. Else, how is it possible that in far too many instances a reasonably intelligent person with no formal experience in studying or working with the educational knowledge base is able to pass tests which purport to cover that educational knowledge base? We would be greatly surprised if such a reasonably intelligent individual could pass an examination in the area of, say, anatomy if that individual had never taken course in, or been otherwise systematically exposed to, the knowledge base in the field of anatomy.

The task force is careful to specify that the establishment of a National Board and national standards for teaching are not intended to specify a national curriculum. The report states:

> While the proposed National Board for Professional Teaching Standards must base its assessment on a determination of what teachers need to know and what they should be able to do, it will not at-

tempt to define a national curriculum for teacher education.

However, it is certainly realistic to expect some standardization in those programs that train teachers. The old issue of whether the curriculum should drive the test or the whether the test should drive the curriculum might be appropriately resolved by stating that both the curriculum and the test should be driven by the requirements for sound professional practice in the classroom. Now, teacher education programs are certainly concerned that their products be able to meet certification/licensing requirements and thus, at a practical level, it is realistic to expect that the national standards will have a significant impact on curricula in teacher education. Given the incredible variability in current teacher education programs, the gains to be realized by a degree of standardization across teacher education programs in this country will be worth the price of reducing to some extent the autonomy currently enjoyed by these teacher education programs.

Relative to the assessment for certification the task force states:

> The assessment itself should enable the board to judge the quality of candidates' general education, their mastery of the subjects they will teach, their knowledge of good teaching practices in general, and their mastery of the techniques required to teach specific subjects. The assessment should determine whether candidates have the capacity to reach, motivate, and support the learning of students from many different backgrounds.

The task force use of the term "capacity" points to an important concept relative to certification and licensing assessment, especially at the initial level. In both ini-

tial licensing and certification the focus is on an estimate about how an individual will behave in the future based on a rather limited set of information about how that individual has behaved in the past. A useful way of thinking about this situation is to state that the knowledges and skills embedded in the standards are necessary but not sufficient to insure effective professional practice. In other words, it is unlikely that one who does not possess the required competencies can be an effective teacher, but it is possible that one who possesses these competencies may still not be an effective teacher. The reason for the occurance of the latter condition is simply that the assessment has measured an individual's "capacity" to be an effective professional practitioner and there are, of course, many reasons why one does not live up to his or her measured capacity. Initial certification/licensing cannot guarantee that an individual will routinely use those competencies which he/she has demonstrated.

It is noteworthy that the task force focuses the initial certification assessment on what a teacher knows and how a teacher behaves in a classroom situation and not on the results of that knowledge or behavior, e.g., student achievement information. The task force is quite correct in stating that "the contribution of individual teachers to student progress is extremely difficult to measure." Relative to professional responsibility, Medley, Coker and Soar (1984) state:

> There seems to be general though tacit agreement that the appropriate basis for evaluating a physician (or any other professional) is whether he follows what is agreed upon, either on the basis of research or professional judgment, as the best practice in a given circumstance. We recognize that many influences other than the physician's skill in diagnosis and treatment--the nature of the illness, how far advanced it is, the health,

> age, vitality, and lifestyle of the patient, his willingness to follow the physician's instructions--will determine the outcome of an individual case. It obviously would be unfair to evaluate the individual physician on the basis of the outcomes he achieves when so much of what determines those outcomes is beyond his control.

In the field of teaching, accountability for impacts on students is more appropriately lodged at the level of the profession while accountability for practice consistent with the professional state-of-the-art is appropriately lodged at the individual level. In other words, it is the responsbility of the profession, based on the best research and professional wisdom available, to specify the knowledge and behavioral requirements, i.e., professional standards for practice, for practitioners, and the responsibility of professional practitioners to perform in concert with these professional standards. According to Medley, Coker and Soar (1984):

> When we are comparing the effectiveness of different treatments, however, it is appropriate and necessary to base the comparison on outcomes. When competing treatments are applied by large numbers of physicians to large numbers of patients, those variables that cannot be controlled have an opportunity to even out in comparisons between treatments. This is, of course, how best practice is usually determined. Once a finding has been established in this way and made part of the knowledge of the field, then it becomes the responsibility of the physician to know the finding and to know when and how to apply it. It is then appropriate to evaluate him on the basis of whether the treatment he uses in any one case is the most appropriate one based on current knowledge in the field.

This position changes in a significant way the manner in which we think about the notion of predictive validity, or, what is it that we are trying to predict. The focus of individual teacher assessment is on the prediction of teacher behavior and not student achievement and the focus of assessment of the professional state-of-the-art is on the prediction of professional practices which impact student achievement. In a recent issue of the Phi Delta Kappan Haberman (1986), when comparing the field of education with other professional areas, points out that, "Only educators critize examinations for licensure and certification on the ground that they cannot predict which candidates will be good teachers."

In describing the methods of the proposed professional assessment the task force states:

> To accomplish these objectives, the assessment techniques used will have to go far beyond multiple-choice examinations. They will have to employ state-of-the-art techniques of formal examination as well as rely in part on the observations of highly trained and experienced teachers of candidates' actual teaching.

The real issue here is, of course, the use of assessment strategies and tools which are appropriate for the type and level of the knowledges/skills to be assessed. Relative to the use of paper and pencil tests Medley, Coker and Soar (1984) state that "there is no evidence (or reason to suppose) that any of them measure or predict the ability to apply either subject matter or professional knowledge in the classroom."

There is a very real difference between the possession of knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge. In the field of teacher education, some theorists have

suggested that these two types of knowledge are sufficiently different that they should be identified by different terms, e.g., academic knowledge and functional or clinical knowledge. It happens that the state-of-the-art in educational measurement is such that we are quite good at measuring the former type of knowledge in a reasonably effective and relatively inexpensive manner. The measurement of applied knowledge is not as advanced, although there has been some positive movement during the past decade. However, the problems in this area are great and the cost is very high. It is, therefore, little wonder that we have tended to measure what we measure best and at the least cost, i.e., academic knowledge with paper and pencil assessment tools. Given the current state-of-the-art of assessing certain knowledge, it seems reasonable to continue to use these strategies where appropriate. These approaches can be useful in the assessment of subject matter content and some of the knowledge content of professional education, that is, stages one and two of the task force assessment recommendations.

When considering the assessment of applied knowledge, it is useful to think in terms of a continuum, with "removed from professional reality" on one end and some "close approximation of professional reality" on the other. This notion is consistent with the task force recommendation of three tiers of assessment, (1) assessment of the content area to be taught, (2) assessment of the content of professional and (3) assessment of the ability to combine these two in performing the act of teaching. Relative to the approximation of professional reality continuum, consideration must be given to the two major dimensions of any assessment situation, (1) the mode of the stimulus to which the candidate is to respond and (2) the mode of the candidate's response. For example, in paper and pencil assessment the stimulus mode is typically a written question or problem and the response mode is typically written as in short answer or essay examinations or checking the appropriate

answer as in multiple choice format examinations. At the classroom application level in professional practice the stimulus mode, i.e., that to which the candidate reacts, is typically some student behavior or classroom condition and the response mode is typically some teacher behavior. Thus, in traditional paper and pencil assessment both the stimulus mode and the response mode are far removed from the reality of the context in which teaching is actually performed.

The following might be thought of as points, relative to specific assessment strategies and tools, along the professional reality continuum:

1. **Demonstrate the possession of the required academic knowledge.** Acquisition of the required knowledge base, including both knowledge of the content to be taught and knowledge of the content of professional education, is essential to any later assessment attempts. If the ultimate test of the capacity to teach involves the assessment of the application of a knowledge base in a classroom situation, it is, of course, necessary that one first possess the knowledge which is to be applied.

2. **Application of the acquired knowledge base in an academic problem solving situation.** Initial attempts at utilizing knowledge to solve problems can be, and typically are, taught and assessed in an academic context. Assessment here is often in the form of paper and pencil examinations. Such examinations are quite appropriate at this level, that is, they are appropriate so long as we do not make the error of assuming that this level of professional problem solving will result in direct transfer of training to applications in the classroom.

In the assessments indicated in points one and two above both the stimulus to which the candidate reacts and

the response mode conform to traditional paper and pencil assessment instrumentation. The point here is that if we believe that one must possess knowledge before one can reasonably expect to apply that knowledge then the use of paper and pencil assessment techniques are appropriate at these levels.

3. **Problem solving with audio and video aids.** In this instance, the stimulus to the candidate might be video tapes rather than a written question. In this assessment mode the stimulus to which the candidate responds includes both and audio and visual information but the candidate response mode might still be with paper and pencil.

4. **Simulations with peers or with actual students and staged situations (prepare and teach a lesson) with peers or with actual students.** At this point on the continuum a variety of structured conditions are available for training and assessment. In such conditions it is possible to structure both the stimulus and response mode in such a manner that each will move away from the unrealistic, i.e., paper and pencil, and toward the realistic, i.e., stimulus input in the form of observations of students in classroom situations and responses in the form of teacher behaviors.

5. **Practice in other teacher's class.** This condition is similiar to the current student teaching/practicum experience in teacher education programs. While the stimulus and response modes in this instance are more realistic, i.e., actual students in actual classrooms providing the stimuli and teacher behaviors constituting the responses, contextual factors associated with responsibility for the class and the presence of a superordinant (in the form of the supervising teacher) cause this condition to fall short of true professional reality.

6. **Teach own class--specific task.** This is an application instance in which the task is to demonstrate a designated teaching competency or set of teaching competencies. It should be noted that in this case the teacher must know in advance that the observation/assessment is to occur and is directed to prepare the context in such a manner as to increase the probability that the competency(s) is likely to occur and, therefore, is likely to be observable.

This is the point at which it is possible to measure the notion of a teacher's "capacity" in terms of the application of the required knowledge/skills in the classroom. It is also the point at which it is appropriate for the initial certification/licensing assessment to occur even though this condition falls short of "true" professional reality as defined by point seven below.

7. **Teach own class--perform as usual.** This is the point which approaches total reality for the teacher but there are two major reasons why this condition will not be appropriate relative to assessment for initial certification/licensing. First, there is the sampling problem, that is, in order to generalize to the teacher's "usual" classroom behavior a prohibitively large number of samples of classroom behavior would be required. Second, if we are interested in a teacher's "usual" behavior, the observation/assessment would have to be accomplished in a covert manner, a concept which is unacceptable in the schools of this country. These observations would have to be covert because there is every reason to believe that teachers behave differently when an observer, or even a TV camera is present in the classroom.

It is, of course, technically possible to place a data gatherer, e.g., observer or TV camera, in the classroom for

a long enough period that the teacher would eventually begin to ignore it and begin to behave as if it were not present. Using such techniques large enough samples of behavior might be drawn which would be representative of that teacher's "usual" behavior. However, the length of time for teachers to become insensitive to such an arrangement might vary greatly across teachers and there would be no information to assist in making a judgment as to the point at which any individual teacher ceased to behave differently because of the presense of the observer or camera.

STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL CONCERNS

State Level Concerns

The following are questions which reflect the types of state level concerns which will need to be addressed in the implementation of a national certification system for teachers. These questions are especially relevant in those instances (hopefully, many) in which states use the national certification, i.e., passing the boards, as a condition for receiving a state license to practice. Again, the reader is reminded that this analysis is focused upon the initial national certificate and initial state licensing policies and procedures. The second level national certificate and its relationship to various state license renewal policies and procedures is outside the scope of concern of this document.

QUESTION: How can we handle the time period between the time a teacher begins teaching and the time at which that teacher meets the requirements for national certification?

This concern grows out of the fact that states, as the legal licensing agency, are responsible for assuring the public that individuals are at least minimally qualified before they are allowed to practice, and out of the expectation that most beginning teachers **will not** have successfully completed all of the requirements for the national certification prior to the time they begin to teach. Given these conditions, it is essential that a workable solution to this problem be developed early on if there is to be any hope of states accepting the national certification assessment as a part of their regular state licensing policies and procedures.

If a state makes "passing the boards" a condition for achieving state licensing, that state has three basic options available, (1) allow a teacher to teach without a license until he/she has met the initial national certification requirements, (2) do not allow an individual to teach until he has successfully completed the national certification requirements, or (3) implement an "interim" license procedure. Of the three, only the third apprears to be reasonable. The first option is, on its face, unacceptable because a state simply will not (indeed, legally cannot) abdicate its responsibility to license teachers. Now, it is true that most states currently allow teachers to practice without a "regular" teaching certificate. The National Center for Educational Information (Feistritzer, 1984) reports that "All but two states issue substandard, limited or emergency credentials to people who don't meet all of the criteria for a real bona-fide teaching certificate. Half of the states will give a substandard credentail to people who have less than a bachelor's degree." This condition is, of course, antithetical to the entire thrust of the task force report. The report states that:

> State officials should declare a date beyond which the state will not permit districts to employ unqualified teachers, that is, hire teachers who

do not meet existing licensure requirements, or permit districts to assign teachers to teach subjects they are not qualified to teach.

In the second instance, the state would be forced to license only teachers who had achieved national certification while employed in some other state. This, again, assumes that stage three of the national certification assessment must be accomplished on the job. Or, the state could license only teachers who have had the opportunity to participate in a five year teacher education program with a formalized long term internship program, thus, negating the possibility of providing certain alternative routes into the teaching profession for many individuals.

The third option is not only the most reasonable but also, based on the experiences of those states which have recently initiated beginning teacher programs, the most feasible. This option would involve the state inserting an additional step in its licensing process. This step would consist of an "initial" teaching license which would lead under certain conditions to the attainment of a regular license.

Note: It is suggested here that the term initial license be used rather than the more common term "provisional" because of the negative connotations associated with the term provisional, e.g., some confuse this term with the idea of an emergency certificate.

There are several variations of licensing patterns available to those states which wish to incorporate the National Board certification standards and assessment system into the state licensing program. However, for the reasons stated above all such variations will necessarily involve some alterations in the task force notions of certification

as a completely voluntary activity and the notion of an individual teacher taking as much time as necessary to complete the National Board certification process. The following is one variation which is generally consistent with the task force recommendations:

1. On successful completion of stage one and stage two of the National Board certification assessment system, and any additional requirements which a state may choose to impose, the candidate will be issued a time bound initial/interim teaching license by the state. **NOTE:** The requirement of successful completion of stage two assessment may have implications for another of the task force concerns, i.e., the encouragement of alternative routes into the teaching profession. These implications were discussed in the section on Professional Assessment in the Field of Teaching.

2. On successful completion of stage three of the task force assessment recommendations and, again, any additional requirements which a state may choose to impose, the candidate will be issued initial professional certification by the National Board and a regular teaching license by the state.

The state may decide not to issue an initial/interim license but instead decide to make completing the National Board certification standards a requirement for the first renewal of the state license. However, because of the concerns relative to tenure status, the first renewal of this license would probably occur at the end of the first three years of teaching.

It is possible that a state need not even change its current licensing criteria and/or procedures under the ini-

tial license arrangement. For example, a state could use criteria and procedures, currently used in its licensing program, in granting the new initial license. The successful completion of the national certification could then be used as one of the criteria for granting the second or "regular" license. It is suggested here that the initial license be issued for a specified length and be a "nonrenewable" license. By combining the specified length with the nonrenewable feature the state accomplishes two objectives--(1) it sends a clear message that it expects continuing professional growth from its beginning teachers and (2) it circumvents potential problems with tenure status concerns.

A variation of the idea of a state using its current criteria and procedures would be to expect that a candidate successfully complete stages one and two of the national certification as a condition for receiving the initial teaching license. As mentioned earlier, the assessment associated with these two stages might be examinations which could certainly be administered prior to beginning to teach. While, at first blush, this might appear to be a sensible approach, care should be taken to assess the potential impact of this arrangement on the notion of encouraging certain alternative routes into the teaching profession. For example, if one potential alternative route were to involve the use of liberal arts graduates, say, a B.A. in chemistry to teach high school chemistry, then it is possible, even probable, that these individuals would not be able to pass the stage two (professional knowledge) component of the national certification assessment. Therefore, the use of stage two assessment as a prerequisite for attaining the initial license would in practice close off some alternative routes to entering the field of teaching.

QUESTION: How will the certification/licensing procedure affect the concept of tenure status in the state?

This question and its answer both revolve around the notion of time. What is the timeframe for the certification/licensing procedure and what is the timeframe for achieving tenure? Specifically, the concern grows out of the expectation that states and local school districts will be reticent to grant tenure to teachers who have not yet advanced beyond the initial license and qualify for a regular state teaching license. Since the time associated with granting tenure in most states is three years, this becomes the operational limit for successfully completing the national certification assessment process. In other words, if the National Certification Board is willing to back off from the task force recommendation that candidates should have as much time as is needed to complete the assessment process for the initial professional certificate, and instead specify a three year deadline, then there should be no problem in this area.

QUESTION: How will national certification affect the state's ability to require additional licening requirements?

The answer to this question is quite simply, "Not at all!" There is nothing inherent in the concept of a set of national certification standards which would preclude states from going beyond the national standards.

Local School District Level Concerns

The following are some of the questions most likely to be asked by teachers and by local school district administrators (principals, central office personnel administra-

tors and superintendents) about a program of national certification which includes assessment of teachers on the job in classrooms. While it is true that every effort should be made to maintain the separation between certification/licensing functions and local employment practice functions, the structure proposed by the task force will make some fundamental changes in the manner in which these functions are conceptualized by local school district personnel. My experience suggests that simply stating that the separation between licensing/certification and local employment practices will be maintained does not make it so in the minds of local teachers and administrators, especially when a major part of the certification/licensing function will be performed in school classrooms with school employees.

QUESTION: What happens if the national certification classroom assessment comes up with a different answer about a teacher than the local school district teacher evaluation system?

While this question may take many different forms, the focus of the concern is the expectation that two evaluation systems which measure the same thing, teaching ability, should not come up with different answers, e.g., the teacher passes the national certification assessment but does not meet the standards of the local school district assessment system. Different answers call into question the validity and/or the reliability of one or the other of the two assessment systems. In addition, there is the fear that different answers will somehow cause legal/grievance problems for local school districts.

The answer to this question is that the national certification assessment system and the assessment systems of local school districts are different, both substantively and procedurally and that, therefore, the two systems do not

measure the same thing. As a result, it is to be expected that there might be numerous instances in which the two systems come up with different answers. The national certification assessment system and local school district assessment systems will most likely be different on the following dimensions:

Purpose: Initial certification/licensing is concerned with capability and does not purport to measure effective teaching. Rather, initial certification/licensing assumes that an effective teacher must possess certain competencies (knowledge and skills) and attempts to measure the degree to which a beginning teacher possesses these competencies. It assumes that there should be few, if any, effective teachers who do not possess the competencies but that there may be many individuals who possess these competencies but who are not effective teachers. There may, in fact, be large numbers of individuals who possess the capability (as measured by the national certification assessment) to be effective teachers but who, for any number of reasons, do not perform up to their potential. Local school evaluation systems, on the other hand, are concerned with "normal or usual" performance as well as with potential.

Scope: It is likely that initial certification/licensing assessment will be more narrow in scope, e.g., will focus on fewer and more generic competencies than will local teacher assessment systems. Initial certification/licensing assessment will focus primarily upon the manner in which a teacher behaves within a classroom context. Clearly, the concept of the role of the teacher is much broader than this and it is this broader concept of the role of teacher with which local school district evaluation systems are concerned. For

example, the national certification assessment might not directly address certain aspects of a teacher's role which relate to working with other school staff, curriculum development, communications with parents, etc. The local school evaluation most certainly would be concerned with these aspects of a teacher's role.

Level: Initial certification/licensing assessment is concerned with demonstration of teaching competencies at a <u>minimum</u> level. School districts are (or should be) concerned with <u>higher</u> levels of performance. In other words, a school district should want its teachers to more than just minimally competent.

> **NOTE:** It is assumed here that the attainment of professional status is a developmental process and that the notion of "minimum competence" changes as one progresses toward more advanced levels of professionalism. For example, minimum at the initial license stage connotes the idea of safe practice, at the regular or first license renewal stage minimum connotes higher levels of professional practice and at some later stage minimum connotes the minimum requirements to achieve the highest levels of professional practice.

Given the above differences, the national certification assessment system and local school district evaluation systems measure different things and measure them differently. Therefore, it is not only possible but probable that the two different types of systems will often come up with different answers. Furthermore, any attempt to insure that the two systems would come up with the same answer would result in a violation of one of the basic assumptions specified earlier,

i.e., the separation of the certification/licensing function from the local employment practices function. For example, any attempt to insure that the two systems would come up with the same answer would involve either (1) increasing the weight of the certification/licensing information or (2) increasing the weight of the local personnel assessment information. In the former case the national certification/licensing system would unduly influence local school district personnel policies--**clearly an unacceptable alternative.** In the latter case, local school districts would unduly influence the certification/licensing function--**an equally unacceptable alternative.**

QUESTION: Given that the two types of teacher evaluation systems might come up with different answers relative to a given teacher, will this difference cause problems, and, if so, how do we deal with such problems?

The best answer to this question revolves around our understanding (and our ability to communicate this understanding to others) that these are two different kinds of evaluation systems with different purposes, substance, scope and procedures. To the extent that such understanding exists, there is no problem because different systems should come up with different answers on occasion and these different answers do **NOT** bring into question the validity of either of the two systems. Because we are considering the comparison of two different systems and only two alternatives, i.e., competent/incompetent, there are only four possible situations (see Figure I) which can occur:

1. The teacher passes both assessments (CELL 1).

2. The teacher fails both assessments (CELL 4).

3. The teacher passes the national certification assessment and fails the local school district assessment (CELL 2).

4. The teacher fails the national certification assessment and passes the local school district assessment (CELL 3).

FIGURE I

SCHOOL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT		
	1 PASS/PASS	2 PASS/FAIL
	3 FAIL/PASS	4 FAIL/FAIL

The first two decision conditions in Figure I (Cells 1 and 4) pose no problems--there is agreement. In the third situation (Cell 2) the school district should follow its own system in making personnel decisions and explain the difference on the basis that the national certification assessment system is narrower in scope than the local system. It is probable that the differences reflected by this cell will be the result of problems which the teacher is having which involve those aspects of the teacher's role which are not addressed by the national certification system, e.g., those differences in scope discussed previously. This condition is analogous to current situations in which a local school district wishes to dismiss a teacher who possesses a regular state license to teach.

In the fourth situation above (Cell 3), the local school district will have to let the teacher go because he will not possess a valid state teaching license after the initial nonrenewable license period expires. If this situation occurs often, a school district might interpret it as an indicator that the expectations of the local personnel evaluation system are set too low and might consider reviewing its teacher evaluation system to be sure that it is sufficiently broad and that the levels of expectations are high enough.

QUESTION: Who will bear the cost of the certification/licensing assessment--the profession; the state; the local school district; the individual teacher?

The first step in addressing this question is to determine what, in fact, are the costs. This is not as straightforward as it might appear on the surface. Depending on the nature of the system in operation, it is possible that certain program costs will be hidden in such a way that decisions about who should bear the cost might never be

raised (see the discussion on program costs in the following section).

In other professions the candidate for the license (physician, lawyer, clinical psychologist, etc.) bears the total cost or a large proportion of the cost. However, assessment procedures in these areas consist, for the most part, of paper and pencil examinations which are much less expensive to administer than the conception of the three stage assessment for national teacher certification. Relative to licensing in the field of education state departments of education have traditionally paid a large portion of the licensing expense. True, in those instances in which a standardized instrument is used, e.g., the NTE, the candidate pays this expense and in many states there is a licensing application fee. Costs to the candidate are, however, much less than the total cost of the licensing process.

QUESTION: Who will have access to national certification assessment information?

This is a question which is sure to be raised by teachers and by local school district administrators. A teacher will be concerned that assessment results might negatively affect her relationship with the principal or superintendent. In Virginia there have been instances in which principals have changed their assessments of teachers after learning that teachers did not pass the state classroom assessment on the first attempt. The obvious answer might be, therefore, that information will be given only to the teacher. On reflection the adequacy of this solution is not so obvious. Local administrators might argue that they are responsible for the school employee, the teacher, and, therefore, should have access to the assessment information in order to help the teacher to improve. In addition, unlike the situation in which a teacher might take a paper and pencil examination and choose to not disclose either the

results or even the fact that he took the test, school district administrators will know that the teacher has participated in the national certification assessment program, e.g., has been observed in the classroom. In this instance, no feedback to administrators is, in fact, feedback and feedback which may be misleading relative to the true state of affairs for a given teacher.

QUESTION: What will be the nature of the national certification assessment feedback provided to teachers -- when, how, by whom?

Experience with the Virginia classroom assessment convinces this writer that teachers perceive feedback from standardized tests quite differently from feedback related to classroom observations. Though they might not like it, they are willing to wait for and will accept brief written feedback related to, for example, GRE or NTE test results, whereas they want immediate and personalized feedback on classroom observation results. This is probably due to the fact that in most instances classroom observations have been conducted for formative purposes by individuals with whom they regularly interact, e.g., principals and/or supervisors.

The notions of immediate and personalized suggest that such feedback be delivered by the classroom observer. However, careful consideration should be given to this alternative before decisions are made. For example, it might be argued that such feedback sessions would greatly increase the costs associated with the program, and more importantly, such feedback sessions would probably include information to assist a teacher to improve his performance. This leads to consideration of the next question---Who is responsible for providing remedial assistance to teachers?

QUESTION: Will assistance be provided to help the teacher successfully complete the certification/licensing assessment, and, if so, will the National Board assume the responsibility for the delivery of this assistance?

The task force suggests that some teachers will not successfully meet all of the national certification requirements immediately or, on the first attempt--a safe assumption given the emphasis on rigor in the task force recommendations. Since it is suggested that a teacher be given enough time (or, multiple attempts) to meet the requirements, it seems reasonable that some intervening treatment/assistance/instruction be employed to help the teacher improve in those requirement areas in which he was deficient. Specification of the content and mode of delivery of such assistance will, of course, have to wait for the development of the assessment instrumentation. It is to be hoped, however, that this assistance will be developed in such a manner that it will focus on the specific problems of the individual rather than take the form of yet another general course in methods of instruction.

The question here is whether or not the National Board will assume the responsibility for providing such assistance. The task force suggests, by omission in the specifications of functions, that this will not be a responsibility of the National Board.

QUESTION: At whose convenience will the classroom observations be scheduled — the profession, the state, the local school district, the individual teacher?

It is suggested that, to the extent possible, the classroom observation phase of the national certification assessment be scheduled at the convenience of the teacher

and the local school district. In an assessment situation the test taker, or candidate for the initial professional certificate in this case, should be aware of the conditions of the assessment and of the expectations for the test taker and, in addition, should be given time to prepare for the assessment.

PROGRAM COSTS

The task force suggests that the cost associated with the implemention of "these proposals over time is substantial" and there is certainly reason to believe that this is true. While the proposal to develop and implement the national certification component might be, comparatively, one of the less expensive of the various task force proposals, the development and implementation costs of this one proposal will be quite large. Assuming that the stage one and stage two assessments involve, in large part, group administered paper and pencil instrumentation, there are available reasonably sound cost estimates for these stages of assessment. Major test publishers have substantial financial experience in the development and implementation of national assessment programs of this type, e.g., SAT and GRE testing programs.

Stage three assessment is quite another matter. Again, assuming that, consistent with the task force recommendation, stage three assessment will consist of observation of the teacher in actual classroom situations over a long period of time, there are several tasks which must be accomplished. First, candidates will need to be oriented to the assessment (observation) conditions. Experience with the Virginia program has convinced this writer that assessment based on observation is sufficiently different from the types of assessment with which candidates are familiar that

some orientation is necessary to be sure that the candidate understands what is expected. Otherwise, candidates will not "take the test" as intended with the result that we will not be sure exactly what it is that we are measuring. Second, individuals who serve as classroom observers will need extensive training. Third, the classroom observation will need to be scheduled. Fourth, observers will need to actually conduct the observations and fifth, the observation information will need to be analyzed and reported.

The list of major stage three assessment functions is not intended to be exhaustive and there are, obviously, several issues embedded in each of these functions. The point here is to suggest that there are real costs associated with each of these functions. The term "real costs" is used intentionally because there is, in the educational business in general and in the area of classroom performance assessment in particular, the tendency to hide costs and then forget that they exist. For example, in many current local and state level assessment programs the costs of actually conducting classroom observations is hidden in that local school division personnel are used to actually do the classroom observations. This practice conveniently ignores the fact that someone is paying these individuals and that, therefore, personnel time spent in conducting observations represents a real cost, usually to local school district budgets. If one doubts that this cost is real, try asking such individuals how much they would charge to perform the observations if they were not conducting them on "company time."

The practice of hiding the costs associated with the assessment is insidious in yet another way, it makes it easy to circumvent the question of who should bear the cost of assessment. A common argument is often used to make it easier to avoid addressing these two knotty questions, how much and who pays. This argument revolves around the contention that the observation training and the actual

performing of the observations makes the observers better professionals, thereby returning some increment of improvement to the local school district which bears the cost. Such benefits may or may not be forthcoming depending on the nature of the observation instrumentation and upon the manner in which the observations are conducted. Even if such benefits do result, it is not prudent to base a system of national certification on the assumption that such an argument will "win the day" with local school divisions.

The suggestion here is simple---identify and reveal all program costs up front and then, once the program price tag is established, directly address the question of who should bear the cost.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The growing national interest and the current level and tenor of discussion focusing on national teaching standards and a certification/licensing assessment system suggests that this is a favorable time to move forward on this front. There are, of course, a number of policy issues (only a few of which have been identified here) which need to be addressed and resolved in order to move toward the development of the design for such a system. These issues involve not only the measurement and evaluation concerns but general system design concerns as well. It is suggested here that, while these two areas of concern are interdependent to a large degree, they are also sufficiently different that they can and should be addressed concurrently.

The notion of tying initial professional certification to the licensing policies of the various states will greatly increase the impact of the National Board recommendation.

While such a move is desirable, it will increase the complexity of the notion, at least initially, and will have implications for some of the task force ideas about the general nature of the certification system, e.g., the idea that the system will be voluntary and the idea of an unlimited timeframe for a teacher to complete the national professional certification requirements.

Clearly, the policy level issues associated with the recommendation for a National Board have implications at national, state and local levels for all segments of the professional education community, e.g., teachers, administrators, teacher educators, as well as for local and state school boards. All such groups must be involved if the system is to possess the required professional and public credibility.

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